

111<sup>TH</sup> SEASON

CD 2009--33

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# MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

WALTER HALL, EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE ADASKIN STRING TRIO  
THOMAS GALLANT, oboe

MARCH 12, 2009 | 1.30 PM

PRESENTED BY



MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

wmct@wmct.on.ca | www.wmct.on.ca | 416-923-7052

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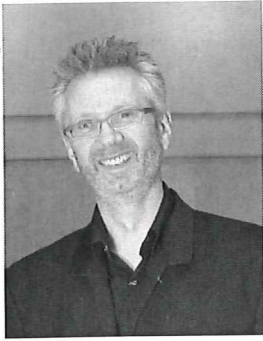
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in presenting its 111<sup>th</sup> season  
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## GREETINGS FROM Simon Fryer, Artistic Director of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto

It is my very great pleasure to welcome you to the 111<sup>th</sup> season of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto's *Music in the Afternoon* concert series. It is an absolute joy for me to participate in this tremendously vital organization and I thank the Artists Selection Committee whose hard work, excellent judgement, and open-mindedness have been instrumental in preparing such an enviable succession of artists for you. I am confident that in the hands of these stellar performers, the vibrant works of composers from Adaskin to Vivaldi and Shostakovich to Schubert will stimulate, challenge, and soothe us.

I know you are going to enjoy each and every one of these concerts and whether you are new to our circle or a seasoned subscriber, I invite you to experience the intensity and excitement of live chamber music!

Simon Fryer



MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Women's Musical Club of Toronto

56 The Esplanade, Suite 203A, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1A7 [www.wmct.on.ca](http://www.wmct.on.ca)

# PROGRAMME

String Trio in C Minor, Op. 9, No. 3

*Allegro con spritio*

*Adagio con espressione*

*Scherzo: Allegro molto e vivace*

*Finale: Presto*

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770 - 1827)

Quartet No. 2 in F Major for oboe, violin,  
viola, and cello

*Allegro spiritoso*

*Menuetto: Moderato*

*Andante*

*Allegro*

Josef Fiala  
(1748 - 1816)

Divertimento No.9, for String Trio (1998)

Murray Adaskin  
(1906 - 2002)

## INTERMISSION

String Trio No.1, H7965a

*Allegro*

*Andante*

*Poco allegro*

Bohuslav Martinů  
(1890 - 1959)

Quartet in F Major for oboe and strings,  
KV 370

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

*Rondeau: Allegro*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756 - 1791)

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The Adaskin String Trio is represented by MCM Artists, [www.mcmartistsworldwide.com](http://www.mcmartistsworldwide.com)

The audience is invited to a reception in the lobby  
to meet the artists following the concert.

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## NOTES

I don't have the statistics to back this up so don't call me as an expert witness, but it seems obvious that, whether you are talking about the groups that perform or the works that they play, there are far fewer string trios around than there are string quartets. There will always be a connection between the number of works written for a particular group of instruments and the number of ensembles dedicated to that repertoire – composers are less likely to write for more unusual groups and groups don't form stable relationships as easily if there is less repertoire available; priority here is, of course, a chicken and egg problem. But there is more to it than that. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the string quartet acquired a special aura as the pinnacle of compositional achievement, something that for some reason never attached itself to the string trio. From a composer's point of view the trio is the more difficult medium but later nineteenth century composers perhaps found the texture too thin for their opulent tastes. In turn, this very quality was attractive to many modernist writers and there seems to have been an upswing in the composition of string trios in the twentieth century.

The relative cachet of the trio and quartet is of some importance when we consider the trios of Beethoven. They all belong to his early years in Vienna. He had arrived in this musically competitive environment saddled with Count Waldstein's oft-quoted testimonial that he would receive the spirit of Haydn from Mozart's hands. It was a slightly odd comment and things didn't quite work out in this way, but it must have heightened Beethoven's sense that, especially in his publications, he would be measured against these two great figures. So he chose to stay away from the one genre that Haydn and Mozart had recently brought to new heights – the string quartet. Instead he embarked on forays into almost every chamber genre except the quartet. His Op. 3, Op. 8 and Op. 9 are all for string trio – the one on today's programme, the third one in the last group, is considered by many Beethoven scholars his best chamber music composition prior to the Op. 18 quartets and seems to me the equal of many of these later works. The Op. 9 trios were published in 1798 shortly after their composition and were dedicated to Count Johann Georg von Browne, one of Beethoven's Viennese patrons.

Murray Adaskin, who was born in 1906, came from an exceptionally musical family and trained first as a violinist; he played for some years



in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He began the serious study of composition relatively late, working with John Weinzwieg and later with Darius Milhaud. He developed a style which one writer characterizes as "generously lyrical, clearly crafted, rhythmically vital, witty, and, curiously enough, recognizably Canadian in content." Adaskin's *Divertimento No. 9* appeared in its present form in 1998, but it is a reworking by the composer of a much earlier work for string orchestra, the *Serenade Concertante* from 1954. It is a particularly apt piece for The Adaskin String Trio to be playing since it is this work that cements these performers to their chosen name. As Gordana Lazarevich explains, in 1997 "Adaskin had received a call from a member of a string trio at McGill University. The three planned to continue their studies. . . in the United States. . . and were seeking a name for their ensemble that was truly Canadian. They asked permission to use the name The Adaskin String Trio, honouring John, Harry, and Murray Adaskin for their contribution to the arts in Canada." Murray Adaskin's pleasure at the request – which he obviously granted – was shown in this work, which the composer dedicated to them and which the trio performed for the first time in 1999 at the University of Regina. The composer said of the parent composition that it was "written in a way...that was amiability itself. . . I hope you will find it amiable and not without warmth."

For the first twelve years of his life Bohuslav Martinů, who was born in Bohemia in 1890, lived in a church tower, a piece of trivia that for some reason has always intrigued me. His father apparently combined his trade as a cobbler with civic duties as a firewatcher and bell ringer. Martinů developed quickly as a violinist and showed enough promise for the small community of Polička in which he lived to subscribe to a fund to send him to study at the Prague Conservatory. His years in Prague were marked by immersion in the lively cultural life of the city, which he found captivating, and by almost complete neglect of his studies. Ill-health, both real and, according to his biographer, simulated, kept him out of the military during the World War I and allowed him time to compose. He must also have developed further as a performer because at this time he also began to deputize in the famous Czech Philharmonic orchestra, an ensemble that he was later to join full time. In 1923 he moved to Paris and began studying composition with Roussel. More important for his development was the overwhelming richness of 1920s artistic life in the French capital – Picasso, the

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Ballets Russes, Cocteau, and Stravinsky and many others. The latter's *L'Histoire du Soldat*, that icon of neo-classicism, left a particularly strong impression and seems to have been the spur that Martinů needed to resume composition. The *String Trio*, written in 1923, was one of the products of this new-found activity.

Mozart's *Quartet in F Major for oboe and strings* dates from the early part of 1781 when the composer was 25; a year that was to mark the beginning of his break from employment with the detested Archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg. In the summer of 1780 Mozart had received a commission to compose an opera for the electoral court at Munich and soon after began work on *Idomeneo*. As the time for the performance drew closer the composer managed to get a six week leave of absence from Salzburg and arrived in Munich in early November. His letters home to his father are full of information about the opera preparations, but they also suggest that he is intent on making a good impression with the elector Karl Theodor, and clearly has high hopes that he will be offered a permanent post there. The opera was an immense undertaking and there are relatively few other works from this time. One of the exceptions is this quartet for oboe and strings, which was written for the virtuoso oboist Friedrich Ramm who was playing in the opera orchestra. Mozart had met Ramm some years earlier on a visit to Mannheim where he was a member of the famous orchestra that Charles Burney praised as an "army of generals." Mozart had written a concerto for him then which he had made his calling card. The composer clearly recognized his exceptional skill and wrote a part for him in this quartet that extends the range of the instrument considerably – and thus ensured that it was Ramm's exclusive property for some time after. The performance of *Idomeneo* was highly successful, but no appointment materialized. When Mozart left Munich shortly afterwards he went, not to Salzburg, but to Vienna. He was to remain there for the rest of his life.

*Programme notes by John Mayo*





## TODAY'S ARTISTS

### THE ADASKIN STRING TRIO THOMAS GALLANT, oboe

The Adaskin String Trio has won over audiences internationally with exuberant and stirring performances. The trio members' playing has been hailed for "vigour, precision, and stylistic certitude" (*Charleston Gazette*) as well as "spontaneity, intensity, and charm" (*Peninsula Review*) and the *Boston Globe* praised them for "directing the listener to the heart of the matter." Formed in 1994, the trio performs extensively throughout the United States and Canada, and has appeared at Merkin Concert Hall in New York, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington DC, and in Boston, Los Angeles, Montreal, Nashville, Pittsburgh, Santa Barbara, and Chicago. In addition, the trio's concerts have been regularly recorded for broadcast by CBC Radio, Radio-Canada, and National Public Radio.

This dynamic ensemble commands a large string trio repertoire ranging from Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven to Dohnányi, Rózsa, Villa-Lobos, Schnittke, and composers of today including commissioned works by Murray Adaskin, Robert Carl, Thomas Schuttenhelm, and David Macbride, among others. In addition, the trio enjoys collaborations of the highest level with various artists. The trio and pianist Sally Pinkas have established themselves as powerful interpreters of numerous masterpieces from the piano quartet literature. Other collaborators have included oboist Thomas Gallant, guitarist Eliot Fisk, bassist Robert Black, and accordion virtuoso Joseph Petric, with whom they commissioned Raymond Luedeke to write a spectacular new work titled *Tango Dreams*.

The trio's recordings include the complete Beethoven string trios on Musica Omnia which won critical acclaim in American Record Guide – "Highly desirable... strongly recommended" and Gramophone – "Superb playing... a flexible command of flow and phrase with instrumental power and eloquence and a nutty tonal richness. ...the trio savours the sensuality of Beethoven's string writing and the intoxicating profusion of tunes while plumbing the emotional depths that lie beneath." In 2008 MSR Classics released a recording of The Adaskin String Trio and pianist Sally Pinkas performing the two piano quartets of Gabriel Fauré.

Although The Adaskin String Trio is currently based in New England, the members of the trio are all originally from Canada. They met in Montreal where they each studied chamber music with founding Orford Quartet cellist Marcel Saint-Cyr. They later completed two years as ensemble-in-residence at The Hartt School under the guidance of the Emerson Quartet. The trio is named in honor of Murray Adaskin, one of Canada's most loved and respected composers, and two of his brothers, violinist Harry Adaskin and producer and music educator John Adaskin.

Emlyn Ngai, violin, is Concertmaster of Tempesta di Mare and Associate Concertmaster of the Carmel Bach Festival. In 1995 he won First Prize on baroque

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violin at the Locatelli Concours Amsterdam, and has since given recitals in Canada, the United States, and Europe. He has been on the faculty of McGill University and Boston University and currently teaches violin and early music at The Hartt School of the University of Hartford.

Steve Larson, viola, has performed throughout North America, Europe, Japan, and China and has appeared as a guest with ensembles such as the Emerson and Miami String Quartets. Since 1998 he has taught at The Hartt School of the University of Hartford where he also serves as Chair for Chamber Music. The year before joining the faculty at Hartt he won second prize at the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition, United Kingdom, receiving the special award for his performance of the commissioned work. He is currently also a member of the Avery Ensemble, a group renowned for both its passionate playing and its imaginative programming of an astonishing variety of repertoire.

Mark Fraser, cello, holds degrees from McGill University, l'Université de Montréal, and The Hartt School and studied cello with Walter Joachim, Aldo Parisot, and Yuli Turovsky. For many years he was the Artistic Director of Project Renaissance, an arts festival near Montreal. He is an active recitalist in Canada and the United States. Recording credits include a CD of works by Bach, Schumann, and Prokofiev with pianist Sooka Wang.

### Thomas Gallant, oboe

Award-winning artist Thomas Gallant is one of the world's few virtuoso solo and chamber music performers on the oboe. His astonishing technique and breath control have often been compared to that of the great violinists and singers. Mr. Gallant has been praised by New Yorker magazine as "a player who unites technical mastery with intentness, charm, and wit."

Mr. Gallant is a First Prize winner of the Concert Artists Guild International New York Competition. His performances have taken him to Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York City, to Washington, DC, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Chicago, as well as to the Salle Pleyel in Paris, Vienna Konzerthaus in Austria, to the Spoleto Festival in Italy, and to the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. He has appeared as guest soloist with the Kronos Quartet at the Ravinia Festival and has collaborated with flutists Jean-Pierre Rampal and Paula Robison, and with Cuarteto Casals, the Colorado and Lark quartets, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, and with The Adaskin String Trio. Recent and upcoming performances include a concert of solo and chamber music works for the oboe at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and tours across the United States as soloist with the Martinů Chamber Orchestra from Prague and Camerata Bariloche from Argentina performing concerti by J. S. Bach, Bellini, and Vaughan-Williams. Mr. Gallant is the solo oboist of the Wind Soloists of New York.

Thomas Gallant is known for his unique performance style which combines the American and European traditions of oboe playing. He plays on an "Evoluzione" oboe made by the Italian maker Fratelli Patricola.

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**Storioni Trio, piano trio**



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**True North Brass**



February 25, 2010, 1.30 p.m. , at Koerner Hall  
**Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano**  
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#### Die Schöne Müllerin - Franz Schubert

Das Wandern (To Wander)

Wohin? (Whither?)

Halt! (Halt!)

Danksagung an den Bach (Giving Thanks to the Brook)

Am Feierabend (After Work)

Der Neugierige (The Curious)

Ungeduld (Impatience)

Morgengruß (Morning Greeting)

Des Müllers Blumen (The Miller's Flowers)

Tränenregen (Rain of Tears)

Mein! (Mine!)

Pause (Pause)

Mit dem grünen Lautenband (With the Lute's Green Ribbon)

Der Jäger (The Hunter)

Eifersucht und Stolz (Jealousy and Pride)

Die liebe Farbe (The Favourite Colour)

Die böse Farbe (The Hateful Colour)

Trockne Blumen (Dry Flowers)

Der Müller und der Bach (The Miller and the Brook)

Des Baches Wiegenlied (The Brook's Lullaby)

Thursday, April 30, 2009, 1.30 p.m.

Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park, Toronto

*Programme subject to change without notice.*



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